

Readers renew subscriptions, buy books, back Cuban 5

BY EMMA JOHNSON

The international campaign to expand the long-term readership of the *Militant* is on schedule with three weeks to make the goal of 575 renewals and subscriptions of six months or more by March 23.

As part of this effort, communist workers have been visiting readers of the socialist paper and encouraging them to buy books on revolutionary working-class politics. This includes 10 titles on special for subscribers, including *The Changing Face of U.S. Politics: Working-Class Politics and the Trade Unions*; *Malcolm X, Black Liberation, and the Road to Workers Power*; *Women and Revolution: The Living Example of the Cuban Revolution*; and *The Working Class and the Transformation of Learning: The Fraud of Education Reform Under Capitalism*. (See ad on page 3.)

Hand in hand with this work, **Continued on page 3**

'Militant' Renewal Drive Feb. 8 - March 23 (week 3)			
Country	Quota	Sold	%
UNITED STATES			
San Francisco	40	25	63%
Miami*	25	15	60%
Houston	25	15	60%
Lincoln	5	3	60%
Philadelphia	30	18	60%
Des Moines	30	17	57%
Atlanta	35	18	51%
Los Angeles	35	18	51%
Chicago	37	19	51%
Seattle	37	18	49%
Omaha	30	14	47%
Boston	13	6	46%
Washington	18	7	39%
New York	90	31	34%
Twin Cities	35	9	26%
Total U.S.	485	233	48%
PRISONERS	8	6	75%
UNITED KINGDOM			
London	30	11	37%
Manchester	20	10	50%
UK Total	50	21	42%
CANADA	32	15	47%
NEW ZEALAND	18	9	50%
AUSTRALIA	20	9	45%
Total	613	293	51%
Should be	575	288	50%
* Raised goal			

Russian troops occupy Crimea in Ukraine

Putin targets popular overturn of Yanukovych



Reuters/Baz Ratner

Some 200 Ukrainian soldiers at Russian-occupied Belbek air force base in Crimea confront Russian troops, demanding right to take up their posts. They marched up to Russian forces, singing national anthem and disregarding warning shots. After seven-hour stand-off, Russian troops backed down and 12 Ukrainian soldiers took up guard duty.

BY JOHN STUDER

Moscow occupied Crimea February 28 and has threatened further incursions into Ukraine. Russian President and former KGB Colonel Vladimir Putin seeks to weaken and reverse the victory won by massive and sustained mobilizations of Ukrainian workers and farmers breaking free from Russian domination. Thousands remain mobilized in Inde-

pendence Square in central Kiev. They are determined to place their stamp on political developments following the overthrow of Moscow-backed Ukrainian President Viktor Yanukovych, who fled Feb. 22.

Though you wouldn't know it from the bourgeois press, tens of thousands have marched across Ukraine — from Kiev in the west to Odessa in the south and Dnipropetrovsk in the east — demanding that Russia withdraw from their country. The propertied rulers not only in Moscow, but also its rivals from Washington and Berlin, all fear the popular struggle for political space and independence.

The new Ukraine government reports the Kremlin has massed some 16,000 Russian troops in Crimea, a southern

Continued on page 11

**DEFEND UKRAINIAN SOVEREIGNTY!
RUSSIAN TROOPS OUT!**
— See page 11

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Cubadebate/Ismael Francisco

Fernando González, center, on arrival in Havana airport Feb. 28 after more than 15 years in U.S. prisons. From left, his sister Marta González, wife Rosa Aurora Freijanes, mother Magali Llorit and sister Lourdes González. He vowed to do "everything in my power" to win release of his three imprisoned comrades: Gerardo Hernández, Antonio Guerrero and Ramón Labañino.

Garment workers in Cambodia fight for raise in minimum wage

BY EMMA JOHNSON

Garment workers in Cambodia conducted a five-day overtime boycott at the end of February, their first major action since a bloody government crackdown ended a national strike for a minimum wage increase Jan 3.

Tens of thousands of workers took part in the Feb. 24-28 walkout, demanding the wage increase, release of unionists jailed during the strike, an

end to a ban of public protests, compensation to families of strikers killed by government forces and prosecution of the military cops who shot them.

The previous strike began Dec. 25, when hundreds of thousands of workers walked off their jobs and took to the streets in response to the government decision to raise the monthly minimum wage to \$100, far short of

Continued on page 10

Cuba welcomes return of 2nd revolutionary jailed in US

BY MARTÍN KOPPEL AND RÓGER CALERO

HAVANA — Fernando González received a hero's welcome on his return home to Cuba Feb. 28. Millions across the island cheered the news as they saw him on TV shortly after his arrival here at José Martí International Airport. The next evening thousands poured into the streets of Havana to join him for a gala celebration, broadcast across the island, at which some of Cuba's most popular musicians performed.

González was released Feb. 27 from the Federal Correctional Institution in Safford, Ariz., after serving his entire sentence of nearly 15 and a half years.

He and four other Cuban revolutionaries — Gerardo Hernández, Ramón Labañino, Antonio Guerrero, and René González — were framed up and railroaded to prison by Washington because of their actions to protect the people of Cuba from attacks by U.S.-based counterrevolutionary

Continued on page 4

Also Inside

- Anti-immigrant ordinance approved in Nebraska town 2
- Disabled workers paid pennies by 'nonprofits' 2
- Egyptian textile workers win support through 12-day strike 7
- Platinum miners in SAfrica stand firm on wage demand 7

Anti-immigrant housing law approved in Nebraska town

BY LAURA GARZA

FREMONT, Neb. — “I have been living here since 1996, and I can see how racism divides people instead of fixing the problem,” said construction worker Gustavo Vallin. He was commenting on a recent referendum upholding an ordinance aimed at preventing immigrants without legal papers from living here.

Ordinance 5165 was passed through a ballot referendum in 2010. It mandates all employers to check the status of new hires using the U.S. government’s E-Verify database; prohibits landlords and others from “harboring illegal aliens”; and requires renters to get a permit from police by showing citizenship or residency papers and paying \$5.

The E-Verify provision was implemented, but the housing restrictions were suspended pending court challenges. After the Eighth Circuit Court of Appeals upheld the anti-immigrant housing measure in October, the city council organized a referendum Feb. 11 on a proposal to rescind it. Some 3,850 residents voted to keep the law; 2,610 voted to strike it.

The issue has polarized this town of 26,000 where the Latino population has grown to about 12 percent, many of whom work in either the large Hormel plant or Fremont Beef plant in the area.

Opponents of the ordinance here formed Fremont Yes and have passed out literature saying that similar laws have been overturned in Hazleton, Pa., and Farmers Branch, Texas.

The mayor, local paper, most city officials and some business interests,

including the Chamber of Commerce, campaigned for repeal of the housing provision. The city government website called for residents to repeal it on the grounds that it’s bad for business and costly to defend. But the site also hosts an appeal to donate for legal expenses to defend the law.

Days after the vote, immigration authorities arrested six workers at the Hormel plant here on charges of alleged identity theft.

Opponents of the law are concerned the vote will embolden anti-immigrant forces. The day after the vote, “I was in line paying for gas when an elderly man busted into the line and said to the cashier ‘Are you going to listen to this illegal alien or me?’” said Jennifer Lopez, a student working two jobs. “I said, ‘I work and vote and pay taxes. Don’t talk to me that way. There’s a thing called respect.’”

Many are waiting to see if the city will enforce the provision. The American Civil Liberties Union and other groups have said they will challenge any incidents of housing discrimination in court.

Ruth Robinett contributed to this article.

‘We won’t go back to days when abortion was illegal’



Militant/Bob Braxton

ATLANTA — Some 250 supporters of women’s right to choose abortion marched around the Georgia Capitol building Feb. 25.

“We won’t go back to a time when our reproductive decisions were not ours to make,” Kwajelyn Jackson, from the Feminist Women’s Health Center, told the crowd.

The center initiated the protest, which was co-sponsored by 35 organizations, including Georgia National Organization for Women, NAACP Georgia, Planned Parenthood, Atlanta Jobs With Justice and the Socialist Workers Party.

“Women should be able to choose what to do with their own bodies,” said Jewels Vickers, 22, a university student and part-time restaurant worker.

Among restrictions now under consideration in the Georgia legislature is SB98, which would ban any state health insurance plan, as well as plans offered under the federal Affordable Care Act, from providing abortion coverage.

— SUSAN LAMONT

Disabled workers paid pennies by ‘nonprofits’

BY BRIAN WILLIAMS

More than 200,000 workers in the U.S. are legally paid below minimum wage — sometimes pennies an hour — because they are physically or mentally disabled. To add insult to injury, most of these jobs are offered by so-called

nonprofit organizations and painted as a form of charity.

According to the Fair Labor Standards Act of 1938, employers can obtain minimum wage certificates from the Department of Labor, enabling them to set up “sheltered workshops” with no bottom limit to hourly wages for disabled workers. This allows companies to pay these workers based on how “productive” bosses say they are compared to workers without a disability.

This assault on labor and human dignity is detailed in a 2012 report by the National Council on Disability, a federal agency. In Columbus, Ohio, “a woman related a story about how after she got her job in the sheltered workshop she promised her family that when she got

her first paycheck she would take them out to dinner,” the report said. “She related how surprised and sad she was when she received the first check — for 38 cents.”

At Goodwill Industries, a multi-billion dollar “nonprofit” business, thousands of disabled workers receive far less than the \$7.25 an hour federal minimum wage. Their wages rise and fall based on “time studies” performed every six months. “Some Goodwill workers in Pennsylvania earned wages as low as 22, 38 and 41 cents per hour in 2009,” reported NBC News.

According to the Labor Department’s Wage and Hour Division, there are nearly 2,000 certified employers paying more than 216,000 workers a subminimum wage.

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THE MILITANT

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The working class has the biggest stake and potential power in the fight for democratic and political rights. The ‘Militant’ covers these struggles worldwide, including in South Korea where the government is going after the rights of unions and opposition political parties.



Eric Chon

Feb. 21 New York protest against attacks on political rights and unions in South Korea.

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‘Militant’ renewal drive

Continued from front page

porters of the *Militant* have been working with others to win new forces to the fight to free the Cuban Five by building exhibits of Antonio Guerrero’s watercolors collection and other activities. Two new books published by Pathfinder Press are strengthening these efforts — *I Will Die the Way I’ve Lived*, with Guerrero’s paintings and commentary, and *Voices From Prison: The Cuban Five*. (See ad on page 9.)

From Philadelphia, George Chalmers reported that a subscriber who recently moved there from Puerto Rico, decided to get three of the books on special — *Malcolm X, Black Liberation, and the Road to Workers Power; Cuba and Angola: The Fight For Africa’s Freedom and Our Own*; and *The Cuban Five: Who They Are, Why They Were Framed, Why They Should Be Free*, along with a six-month renewal to the paper.

“Since our first door-to-door visit, his companion arrived from Puerto Rico. She brought out a small stack of back issues that had a number of articles underlined with notes in the column,” Chalmers wrote.

Arlene Rubinstein, an aerospace worker in Los Angeles, sold three copies of *I Will Die the Way I’ve Lived* and four copies of *Voices From Prison* to co-workers as part of promoting a one-month exhibit of Guerrero’s paintings that opened March 2 there. In the process she learned that two of these workers, like the Five, had spent time in solitary confinement while in prison.

“I’m still studying the paintings by Antonio,” said another worker, Erick Vicari, who has read the *Militant* for

a year and a half. “I consider myself a supporter of the Cuban Five. It’s a frame-up.” The fact that U.S. authorities handcuffed Fernando González until his plane landed in Cuba was “standard operating procedure, the same way they treat workers without papers as criminals.” González, one of the Five, was released from a U.S. prison Feb. 27 and flown to Cuba the following day. (See article on front page.)

While building the Los Angeles exhibit, Ellie García, who works at Triumph Vought Aerostructures in Hawthorne, Calif., sold three renewals and two copies of *I Will Die the Way I’ve Lived* to co-workers. “My brother was imprisoned at the age of 28 until his death at 59,” Arnold Kidd told her. “My parents didn’t have the money to pay for a good lawyer. They put you in the system and you’re gone. Every time I look at the book my brother comes up.”

García also sold five copies of the book at a meeting of the Latino Caucus of a Service Employees International Union local where she had been invited to give a presentation on the Five and Guerrero’s exhibit.

‘I can’t be without this paper’

“I can’t be without this paper,” said Chris Kelly, a young postal worker in Omaha, Neb., when Jacquie Henderson visited him Feb. 19. “My wife reads it, too. When we read the true stories about workers’ struggles around the world that are in the paper, we get mad at all the other so-called news.”

Kelly renewed for six months and bought a copy of *I Will Die the Way I’ve Lived*. A showing of Guerrero’s watercolors is scheduled June 4-7 at Gallery



Militant/Tom Baumann

Ivette Haiti, right, gets *Militant* renewal, new Spanish edition of *Cosmetics, Fashions, and the Exploitation of Women* and *I Will Die the Way I’ve Lived* from Naomi Craine in Miami Feb. 15.

72 in the Vinton area in South Omaha.

“I’ll see if my mariachi band is available to play there,” said Reyna Barales, an assistant teacher, when she signed up for her renewal the same day and volunteered to join in building the exhibit. She also helped her parents get a subscription and introduced them to the fight for the Cuban Five.

Supporters of the *Militant* have been joining demonstrations in solidarity with working people in Ukraine who overthrew the government of Viktor Yanukovych and to protest Moscow’s military intervention there. In New York March 2 protesters bought two subscriptions and 42 copies of the paper. In London that day supporters sold one subscription and 25 papers. (See articles on page 5.)

“I am impressed that workers meet weekly on different questions and I’m

also impressed by the books,” said Geneviève Cloutier, a university student who drove into Montreal to attend a forum on the fight in Ukraine and renew her subscription.

“I’m with you. Keep up the work. But it’s too hard for me to read English, I have to use the dictionary all the time, so I won’t continue getting the paper,” Anne-Marie Isabel, a customer service worker for Hydro-Quebec, told François Bradette and Katy LeRougetel when they knocked on her door March 2. “But I’m part of the union and we try to get people to see what’s really happening and that we have to speak our mind to the boss. I like doing that. Things are moving in the world. I’m very happy about that. In Ukraine, they have the right to choose. It’s going to develop further.”

Isabel bought the French edition of *The Cuban Five* and reads the French-language *Militant* articles that are translated each week.

To renew, get a subscription or join the drive, contact a distributor listed on page 6 or the *Militant* at (212) 244-4899.

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by Asela de los Santos, Mary-Alice Waters and others
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by Joseph Hansen, Evelyn Reed, Mary-Alice Waters
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—MILITANT LABOR FORUMS—

GEORGIA

Atlanta
From Iowa to West Virginia, Profit Drive Threatens Land and Labor. Speaker: Sam Manuel, Socialist Workers Party. Fri., March 14, 7:30 p.m. 777 Cleveland Ave. SW, Suite 103. Tel.: (678) 528-7828.

IOWA

Des Moines
The Political and Moral Crisis of Capitalism and the Road to Workers Power. Speaker: Helen Meyers, Socialist Workers Party. Fri., March 14, 7:30 p.m. 3707 Douglas Ave. Tel.: (515) 707-1779.

MINNESOTA

Minneapolis
Lessons from Malcolm X and the Need for a Revolution in the U.S. Speaker: Joanne Murphy, Socialist Workers Party. Fri., March 14, 7:30 p.m. 416 E. Hennepin Ave., Room 214. Tel.: (612) 729-1205.

WASHINGTON

Seattle
Washington’s Political Police and the American Working Class. Speaker: Edwin Fruit, Socialist Workers Party. Fri., March 14, 7:30 p.m. 5418 Rainier Ave. S. Tel.: (206) 323-1755.

See distributors
on page 6

Minneapolis event celebrates return of Fernando González

BY TOM FISKE

MINNEAPOLIS — “We are celebrating tonight the release of Fernando González from jail and his return to Cuba,” said Franklin Curbelo, a leader of the Minnesota Cuba Committee, opening a program Feb. 28 at the Regla de Oro art gallery here. “In Angola he fought with arms. In jail he fought with ideas. For all of us the fight to win the freedom of the three of the Cuban Five remaining in U.S. jails will continue.”

Despite freezing temperatures and ice-covered roads, some 50 people came out for the event, which was also the final day of Antonio Guerrero’s “I Will Die the Way I’ve Lived” watercolor exhibition there.

Kyle Edwards, an executive board member of American Federation of State, County and Municipal Employees Local 3800, which represents clerical workers at the University of Minnesota, noted the slanders in the big-business media about the Five and quoted from a letter he wrote to the *Minneapolis Star Tribune*. “The Five were convicted on trumped-up charges in a biased trial where the U.S. government paid journalists to create pressure for conviction,”

Showings of paintings by Antonio Guerrero, one of the Cuban Five *I Will Die the Way I’ve Lived*



Exhibits Los Angeles March 2-30

Coffee and Crepes, 4545 Cesar Chavez Ave. Tel.: (323) 263-4544; (323) 661-1980. Exhibition schedule: Tues.-Thurs., 10AM-4PM; Fri.-Sat., 12PM-8PM.

Chicago March 21-April 13

Opening reception: Sat., March 22, 7-9PM. Beverly Arts Center, 2407 W. 111th St. Tel.: (773) 445-3838. Exhibition schedule: Mon.-Fri., 9AM-9PM (closes at 5 p.m. if no evening event); Sat., 12PM-5PM.; Sun., 1-4PM.

Philadelphia Fri., March 21

Reception: 7 p.m. Exhibition: 7-9 p.m. Imperfect Gallery, 5601 Greene St. (Germantown) Tel.: (917) 957-4504, imperfectgallery.com

Atlanta March 17-April 5

Opening program: Thurs., March 20, 5-8PM. Spelman College, Cosby Building, 3rd Floor, in the Cloister. 350 Spelman Lane SW

the letter said. “While the United States supported the South African apartheid government, Fernando González was one of the hundreds of thousands of Cubans who volunteered to go to Angola and fight for Angolan independence while expelling the invading apartheid South African troops.” AFSCME Local 3800 is active in the campaign to free the Five.

“In 2007 some of the harshest sentences of the Cuban Five were reduced,” said Frank Forrestal, another leader of the Minnesota Cuba Committee and member of the Socialist Workers Party. “The U.S. government complained about the ‘noise’ the case was producing in the world. We need, as Gerardo Hernández explained, to continue to reach out to a jury of millions.”

A number of participants remarked about their impressions of Guerrero’s paintings. “They are inspiring,” said David Byrd, a medical technician. “The hard times in jail brought out their cre-



Militant/Natalie Morrison

ativity and will to resist.”

“Everyone can be affected by these paintings in some way,” said Ashley Monk, a member of Advocates for Human Rights. “They are remarkable.”

“You can see the excellent work they have done in prison in winning others to support the Cuban Revolution and other struggles of working people,” said Marco Davila, a long-time fighter for immigrant workers, commenting on the book *Voices From Prison: The Cuban Five*.

For sale at the exhibit was a large stock of three books about the fight to free the Five. *The Case of the Cuban Five*, *I Will Die the Way I’ve Lived* and

Below, Franklin Curbelo of Minnesota Cuba Committee speaks at Feb. 28 meeting to celebrate Fernando González’s return to Cuba at Regla de Oro gallery, which hosted “I Will Die the Way I’ve Lived” exhibit by Antonio Guerrero. Left, high school students from Perpich Center for Arts Education view exhibit the day before.



Jessica Smith

Voices From Prison. Some 70 of these titles were sold during the Feb. 4-28 exhibit at the gallery.

About 35 high school students from Perpich Center for Arts Education attended the exhibit Feb. 27.

González welcomed by thousands in Cuba

Continued from front page
groups. They have won worldwide support in their fight for freedom. (See “Who Are the Cuban Five?” on page 5.)

González gave a military salute as he was greeted at the airport by Cuban President Raúl Castro and other government leaders. He was reunited with his wife Rosa Aurora Freijanes, his mother Magali Lloret and his two sisters. They were accompanied by relatives of other members of the Cuban Five.

René González, who had been released from U.S. custody nearly a year ago, greeted him with a giant hug. It was the first time the two had seen each other since the five revolutionaries were sentenced in 2001 in a federal court in Miami.

In brief words to the press, Fernando González said that while he felt “an immense joy, there is a missing piece in that joy, and that piece will be filled when Ramón, Gerardo, and Tony are right here” with us.

Now that he is free, González said, “my role will be to do everything in my power to hasten that moment.”

Above all, he expressed thanks to his comrades in arms. In the initial two years they were locked up at the Miami Federal Detention Center — most of that time in punishment cells — “before a solidarity movement even existed, seeing them and sharing with them the difficult moments was always a source of energy for me in the struggle.”

He thanked the people and the revolutionary leadership of Cuba, “who have supported us in this struggle for so many years.”

Asked by a reporter how it felt to be released after 15 years in U.S. prisons, González said he only felt free when the plane landed in Cuba. Right up to that moment he had been kept in handcuffs by U.S. immigration, into whose custody he was transferred on leaving

the Arizona federal prison for deportation to Cuba.

“It is we who are grateful to you,” said Cuban President Castro in welcoming Fernando, “especially because of the firmness you have demonstrated over so many years.”

The same day, the Cuban daily *Granma* published an extensive interview with González conducted by a group of online Cuban journalists via written questions and answers a few days before his release. “I feel satisfied that I fulfilled what I consider my duty with dignity and honor,” he told the reporters. “We know that in punishing us, they are trying to punish Cuba for the heresy of seeking to build a just society, and for doing so despite the hostility of the most powerful country on the planet, one that cannot accept the idea that Cuba is an independent and sovereign country.”

He said, “I simply did and have done what I’m sure millions of Cubans would have done” as the result of “our people’s history and spirit of struggle and resistance.”

The lesson the U.S. government should learn, he added, is that “just as they were unable to break the Five,

they will never be able to destroy the revolution” in Cuba.

The five have been named Heroes of the Republic of Cuba by the Cuban government.

In a message sent from the Victorville federal prison in California, Gerardo Hernández — who is serving a double life sentence on trumped-up espionage and murder conspiracy charges — saluted Fernando for “coming out of prison with his head held high.” With his release, “our struggle is strengthened and reinforced by another standard-bearer” who now joins René González, he said (see Hernández’s message page 5).

That Saturday night a concert in support of the Five and celebrating Fernando González’s return was held on the steps of the main entrance to University of Havana. González and Yuniasky Crespo Baquero, first secretary of Cuba’s Union of Young Communists (UJC), briefly addressed the crowd of some 15,000. The concert, sponsored by the UJC and the Federation of University Students (FEU), featured top musical groups and artists such as Los Van Van, Yoruba An-dabo and Vicente Feliú.



Cubadebate/Ismael Francisco

Fernando González (front center), René González (left), and family members of each at concert for Cuban Five on steps of University of Havana, March 1. Some 15,000 were in attendance.

‘Russia out of Ukraine,’ demand protest actions

New York

Some 400 protesters demonstrating against Russian intervention in Ukraine marched to the Russian Consulate on 91st Street March 2 with chants that included “No war in Ukraine!” “Putin. Hands off Ukraine!” and “Crimea is Ukrainian!”

“I’m against any military action,” said Evgeny Ryabov, 23, who is from Izhevsk, Russia. “I came to the demonstration along with my wife, who wanted to support her country.” Ryabov and Angelina Dziuba, 24, who moved to the U.S. from southern Ukraine three years ago, live in Brooklyn.

“Russia is provoking Ukraine,” said Dziuba. “They have their military forces there and Ukraine will push back.”

“In Crimea there is no reason for Russian military people to be there. The Tatars there are against the Russian occupation. They support Ukraine,” Dziuba said.

Razom, a Ukrainian group that has been organizing support for popular demonstrations in Kiev’s Independence Square for the past three months, sponsored the action. Razom also called a rally here the previous Sunday to honor those killed by police in Kiev and to celebrate the overthrow of Ukrainian President Viktor Yanukovich.

“The Russian invasion is consistent with Putin and is the logical conclusion of the Russian invasion of Geor-

gia in 2008,” said Stanislav Bardinok, who came to the U.S. from Ukraine 15 years ago. “Part of Georgia is still under occupation. Putin wants to re-establish the previous borders of the USSR.”

Georgian, Byelorussian, and Tatar flags mixed in among the Ukrainian flags.

“Our independence for the past decades was just on paper,” said Inna Rentur, a housecleaner. She and her friends heard about the protest on the radio while in a car and immediately decided to come. “Yanukovich stole the country’s money and resources,” said Rentur. “He is a criminal. It is very painful. One of my classmates died in Independence Square.”

— Dan Fein

London

More than 500 people rallied outside the Russian Embassy here March 2 to protest Russian domination of Ukraine and military moves against the country by the Vladimir Putin government in Moscow.

Chants included, “Stop the war in Ukraine,” “Putin is a criminal,” “Crimea is Ukraine” and “Glory to Ukraine, glory to the heroes,” referring to those who recently died at the hand of the riot police in Ukraine.

Protesters included people from Georgia, Latvia and Lithuania, nations



Militant photos by Dan Fein

People from many parts of former Soviet Union, including from Russia, turned out March 2 to protest Moscow’s military intervention in Ukraine and honor those killed in Kiev. March to Russian Consulate in New York drew some 400 participants. “Our independence since 1991 was just on paper,” one participant told *Militant*.

dominated by Russia under the czarist empire and under the Stalinist government of the Soviet Union.

Many Russians in solidarity with those fighting for independence in Ukraine and opposed to the Putin government attended the rally, as did a number of Syrians opposed to the tyranny of the Bashar al-Assad regime. Syrian flags mixed with those of Ukraine.

“Putin doesn’t know what he is doing, uniting people from around the

world for democracy and against dictatorship,” said Bohdan Ciapryna, a protest organizer and retired surgeon.

“People are uniting,” said Andriy Lototskyy, a carpenter in south London. “I have been part of weekly meetings, but this is the biggest event we’ve had, and it includes people from all over the U.K. and from many different countries as well.”

“I was part of the demonstrations over there” said Andriy Chornyy, 15, who had just returned from Ternopil in west Ukraine. “There were many young people there like me, because everyone wants to participate in the demonstrations and discussions taking place.”

— Ólöf Andra Proppé

‘Our struggle is reinforced by another standard-bearer’

Two days before Fernando González’s release from prison in Safford, Ariz., Gerardo Hernández, who was given the longest sentence of the Cuban Five — double life plus 15 years — sent this message to supporters of their fight for freedom. The translation from Spanish is by the *Militant*.

Among the Five, each of us is obviously the “most” or “least” of something. For example, Ramón is the tallest, followed closely by René. Fernando happens to be the smallest in physical

stature, while I took second place in that category, beating out Tony by a hair (although “hair” is just a manner of speaking). Because of Fernando’s “title” in this category, we would sometimes call him “the little guy” — partly out of affection, but also due to our deeply rooted professional habit of avoiding names.

What I have said here may seem irrelevant and even a little frivolous, but in these days of joy and anxiety, with only a few hours separating Fernando from his freedom (and hopefully also from his return), as I recall our brother’s

many demonstrations of greatness, I have thought about the irony of calling this giant a “little guy.”

When we were arrested, Fernando had additional reasons to feel anguish, pain, frustration. To use the terms of baseball, which Fernando likes so much, he sometimes pitched entire games, but this time his mission in Miami was that of a short relief pitcher. He was supposed to return to Cuba soon. His wedding was rapidly approaching. His bride, the warrior Rosa who sacrificed everything in her life for him, almost had her wedding dress on. Even with all this, we never heard a single lament from the giant.

I was witness to Fernando’s response when his trial lawyer, Joaquín Méndez, offering him his best professional advice, told Fernando that because the charges against him were less serious, any competent defense attorney would choose to separate his case from the rest as the best legal strategy. The reply by Fernando — as well as by René, who was given similar advice — was decisive and unequivocal.

Fifteen and a half years later, Fernando will leave prison with his head held high, as René did. They conceded nothing to him either. His sentence was the maximum possible. The time off for good conduct was earned, and by law they had to give it to him.

Today those of us who love him and admire him will celebrate. Confident that our struggle is now reinforced by another standard-bearer, we send him a strong embrace and say:

Congratulations, giant!

Thank you for your example!

Gerardo Hernández Nordelo
Victorville Federal Penitentiary, Calif.
Feb. 25, 2014

— David Rosenfeld

Who are the Cuban Five?



Fernando González, Gerardo Hernández, Antonio Guerrero, Ramón Labañino and René González are Cuban revolutionaries who during the 1990s accepted assignments from the Cuban government to gather information on the operations and plans of Cuban-American paramilitary groups based in southern Florida. These rightist outfits, organizing on U.S. soil with virtual impunity, have a long record of carrying out bombings, assassinations and other deadly attacks, both against targets in Cuba and supporters of the Cuban Revolution in the United States, Puerto Rico and elsewhere.

On Sept. 12, 1998, the five were arrested by the FBI. They were framed up and convicted on a variety of charges, which included acting as unregistered agents of the Cuban government and possession of false identity documents. Without a shred of evidence, three were charged with “conspiracy to gather and transmit national defense information.”

Hernández was also convicted of conspiracy to commit murder, based on the pretext that he bore responsibility for the Cuban government’s 1996 shoot-down of two Brothers to the Rescue aircraft that had invaded Cuban airspace in disregard of Havana’s repeated warnings. He is serving two life terms plus 15 years. His wife Adriana Pérez is barred from entering the United States.

René González returned to Cuba in May 2013, halfway through his parole. Fernando González was released Feb. 27 and arrived in Cuba the next day.

Leadership from women was vital to Cuban Revolution

Below are excerpts from Women in Cuba: The Making of a Revolution Within the Revolution. Its authors, Cuban revolutionaries Vilma Espín, Asela de los Santos and Yolanda Ferrer, were leaders of the Federation of Cuban Women. Printed here is part of an interview Pathfinder editors Mary-Alice Waters and Martín Koppel conducted with de los Santos. Copyright © 2012 by Pathfinder Press. Reprinted by permission.

BOOKS OF THE MONTH

WATERS: You’ve mentioned on other occasions the important place of women in the underground struggle. What were some of the things they did?

DE LOS SANTOS: As the struggle continued, more and more women became part of it.

Fidel’s course of building a mass revolutionary movement capable of sustaining and supporting the armed struggle enabled both men and women to be integrated.

Women joined the ranks of the Rebel Army. In the Sierra Maestra there was a platoon of women fighters known as the Marianas, named after Mariana Grajales, the mother of the eight Maceo brothers, all of whom fought for independence from Spain. She was one of the great heroes of the war for independence.

In the underground we did whatever



Council of State Office of Historical Affairs; inset,FMC
Under leadership of Fidel Castro, women worked on every front in Cuban Revolution. Above, July 26 Movement meeting in Sierra Maestra, 1957. From left, Vilma Espín, Fidel Castro, Haydée Santamaría, Celia Sánchez. Inset, Asela de los Santos (right) receives Ana Betancourt award, 1974. From left, Vilma Espín, Fidel Castro, Raúl Castro.



was necessary. We sewed uniforms and armbands for the Rebel Army. We helped provide cover for moving weapons and young combatants. We found families who would house revolutionary fighters who had gone underground. We secured medicine. We served as messengers between different revolutionary fronts. We distributed subversive propaganda and collected supplies.

In short, women worked on every front in the underground struggle.

This included tasks that were even more dangerous. In Miami, for example, there was a delegate of the July 26 Movement who was responsible for collecting weapons, provisions, money, and so on to be sent to Cuba in various ways. A group of young women would leave Miami with small weapons, bullets, messages, letters, you name it, hidden under the full skirts that were fashionable then.

One time there were three of us on a trip. We were running late for the plane in Miami. I put four or five pistols in pouches, which we placed under our skirts. We simply basted them in. When we arrived at the airport in Varadero and I got up from my seat, I suddenly felt something rip. I called over a compañera who was traveling with me — we were already standing in the aisle, waiting to get off the plane.

“Whatever happens, you don’t know me and I don’t know you,” I said. To stop

the gun from banging, I started limping, like I’d just had surgery. Somehow we got out. . . .

In all, I made nine trips from Miami to Havana, Camagüey, or Varadero.

WATERS: Nine trips is a lot.

DE LOS SANTOS: Once in the Havana airport they set a trap using a compañera from Santiago as bait. I had something under my skirt, and I saw her walking between two men. “Something’s not right here,” I said to myself, and kept on going. It turned out they were using this compañera to try to catch anyone greeting or making contact with her.

You develop an instinct after a while, as well as an ability to remain calm in face of danger. That’s what protects you. At the beginning I was scared. After some experience, I lost that fear. That’s the truth.

The women in the underground struggle were very serious. The compañeros had great respect and admiration for us, and they protected us.

A young woman like Vilma, who came from a well-off family, was willing to give her life. That’s just one example. There were others.

The seriousness of women in the movement helped our mothers have confidence that the struggle we were involved in was genuine. Think what it meant when a mother knew that her daughter — sometimes very young — was involved in underground activity,

yet the family raised no objections. Most of the time the family was not an obstacle to young women and men being able to join the struggle. That had tremendous significance.

Women became increasingly involved in Santiago de Cuba and in the rest of the country.

WATERS: Participating in this kind of struggle must have given women confidence, a sense of accomplishment and liberation. It wasn’t so easy to do.

DE LOS SANTOS: That’s right. In other conditions this wouldn’t have been possible. Girls would have studied in order to get a job, as they normally had.

I’m talking about the middle class — the upper class is something else. But for women of the professional middle class, and from poor families, the hope was to get ahead by getting an education and a job.

As the struggle deepened, women saw greater possibilities opening up. There were many important things to do. The revolution offered them this opportunity. And I’m talking about even before the victory.

When a deepgoing revolution takes place, women, who have been oppressed for centuries, for millennia, want to take part.

You asked me if working in the underground was a liberating experience for a woman. Yes, it was. No one could stop the women.

WATERS: It gave you a sense of worth . . .

DE LOS SANTOS: . . . of worth as a human being, as part of the people.

WATERS: For me this is a very significant element of the Cuban Revolution. Your generation in Cuba was in the vanguard of the historic changes in women’s economic and social status, as we were drawn out of the home and into social labor to a previously unprecedented degree, something that began during the Second World War.

In no other socialist revolution have there been so many leaders who were women: Vilma Espín, Celia Sánchez, Haydée Santamaría, Melba Hernández, to name but a few of the best known. Their leadership was indispensable. It’s one of the elements of Cuba’s revolutionary history that needs to be better known and better understood.

March

BOOKS OF THE MONTH

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6 The Militant March 17, 2014

ON THE PICKET LINE

Egyptian textile workers win support through 12-day strike

Some 12,000 striking textile workers at the giant Mahalla Weaving and Textile company in Mahalla, Egypt, suspended their labor action for 60 days and returned to work Feb. 22 after a 12-day strike over back pay, wages and other demands.

“Workers feel we have scored a victory,” said Kamal Fayoumy, a leader of the textile workers, the day they returned. Fayoumy pointed to the government’s promises to hire more workers and revive production, which has declined in recent years. The government owns the Mahalla mill, like many industrial enterprises in Egypt.

According to other leaders of the strike, Prime Minister Hazem el-Beb-lawi has promised to pay overdue bonuses and implement the new national minimum wage law, which is supposed to guarantee 1,200 Egyptian pounds (\$170) monthly to workers in certain public enterprises. The government’s Minister of Investment also promised to open an investigation of the Mahalla textile plant president, Fouad Abdel-Alim, whom workers demand be dismissed for corruption and mismanagement.

“One of the most important gains of the strike has been our success in reaching out,” said Fayoumy. “All of Egypt now knows about the conditions of the textile workers and our demands. That is very positive for the future.”

The Mahalla strike grew to more than 22,000 workers before it was suspended, with more than 10,000 other textile workers joining to press for the 1,200-pound minimum wage for all workers in private and public industries.

Workers in other industries have also begun to take strike action in face of rising prices, high unemployment and attacks on workers’ rights. Official joblessness is now at 13 percent and more than 25 percent for young Egyptians. The annual rate of inflation stands at nearly 12 percent.

Bus drivers and other transport workers began a strike Feb. 22 at seven garages in Cairo to demand implementation of the national minimum wage law. Two days later, all 28 garages in the greater Cairo area were on strike. Wages for transport workers begin as low as 600 Egyptian pounds (\$86) a month.

The fight for the government-promised minimum wage for some public workers to be applied across the board

is gaining support among workers.

In contrast to the government’s resistance to workers’ demands, Egypt’s interim president, Adly Mansour, acted quickly to grant a 30 percent pay increase to police who staged strikes in six provinces in mid-February.

—Paul Mailhot

Platinum miners in SAfrica stand firm on wage demand

Heading into the sixth week of their strike against the three largest platinum companies in the world, more than 70,000 miners in South Africa are standing firm in their demand that the starting wage be doubled to 12,500 rand a month (\$1,120). The strike began Jan. 23.

The three companies — Anglo American Platinum (Amplats), Impala Platinum and Lonmin — are offering average wage increases of 7 to 8 percent.

Impala CEO Terence Goodlace told *Mining Weekly* Feb. 27 that agreeing to the miners’ demands, “would be catastrophic and leave us with no other alternative but to close the whole of [their operations at] Rustenburg down.”

“We are not worried,” Evans Ramokga, a winch operator at Amplats and a local leader of the Association of Mineworkers and Construction Union, said by phone Feb. 28 from Rustenburg. “If they can’t change the conditions at the mine then these mines must be owned by our government and they can go back to London or wherever. We don’t mind.” Amplats and Lonmin owners are London-based.

“They promised to build schools to help the communities, to build housing, but they don’t keep their promises,” he said. “The company has built houses, but mostly just supervisors live there, the workers don’t qualify.”

“Maybe 20 percent of the miners live in hostels,” Ramokga said, which are notorious for overcrowding and poor conditions. “But 80 percent or more live in shacks. Most don’t have running water or electricity, unless they buy a generator.”

Amplats has sued AMCU, accusing the union of violating picketing rules and violence. The company is demanding that the union leaders be fined and jailed.

“The South African government and the companies are ganging up against AMCU to paralyze us financially and

Stores in Mali, Burkina Faso order 1,055 Pathfinder books



Militant/Jean-louis Salfati

BAMAKO, Mali — Some 45 students and teachers attended a Feb. 20 presentation by Pathfinder representatives Michel Prairie

from Montreal (inset, speaking) and Jean-louis Salfati from Paris at the Balla Fasséké Kouyaté Art and Multimedia Crafts Conservatory here in the capital city of this West African country. Also present was Sidenio Acosta, Cuban ambassador in Mali (inset, right). There were 16 Cuban art teachers working at the Conservatory till January 2013, when all 153 Cuban doctors, sport trainers, teachers and other volunteers were evacuated from the country in face of a spreading civil war.

Prairie explained how socialist workers are using books published by Pathfinder — from *The Communist Manifesto* to *Thomas Sankara Speaks* and *The Cuban Five: Who They Are, Why They Were Framed, Why They Should Be Free* — to build communist parties in the U.S., Canada and other countries. Salfati explained the special effort made by Pathfinder to make these books available in West Africa at significantly reduced prices. In the discussion period, Mohamed Kassoum Djiré, a surgeon from Mali trained in Cuba for 13 years, praised Pathfinder books, which he knew from the Havana Book Fair in Cuba and a World Festival of Youth and Students he attended in South Africa a few years ago.

As a result of a one-week trip by Prairie and Salfati to Bamako and Ouagadougou, Burkina Faso, five bookstores ordered a total of 1,055 Pathfinder books, with two more orders to come.

— JEAN-LOUIS Salfati

break the strike and protect their interests,” AMCU President Joseph Mathunjwa said by phone Feb. 28 from Johannesburg after a negotiating session. “They know we don’t have such money. And that this is the most peaceful strike we have ever had in South Africa.”

Until last year, the government-allied National Union of Mineworkers was the main union in the mines. But after more than 100,000 platinum, gold, chrome and coal miners went out on strike at the end of 2012 to demand 12,500 rand — despite opposition from the NUM leadership — tens of thousands joined AMCU, especially in platinum where AMCU now represents an overwhelm-

ing majority of workers.

In a Feb. 27 statement, the NUM leadership called on platinum miners to “be brave, stand up and save the mining industry from ruin,” an open invitation to abandon the strike.

“Right now AMCU is standing alone, there is no other union that is giving us solidarity,” Ramokga said. “But we won’t stop. It’s not about AMCU, it’s about the working class, which faces the same problems we do.”

Messages of solidarity with the miners can be sent to AMCU at jvmathunjwa@gmail.com and enkangalargn.mp@amcu.co.za.

— Seth Galinsky

25, 50, AND 75 YEARS AGO



March 17, 1989

Nearly a week after a strike by 8,500 machinists began, the operations of Eastern Airlines — the seventh-largest U.S. airline — remain shut down tight.

“Eastern management refused to negotiate seriously,” explains a leaflet being distributed by IAM Local 1018 at New York’s LaGuardia Airport. The company continued to the end “to demand the unlimited right to farm out our work, pay cuts as high as 56 percent in some categories, massive work rule changes, the hiring of part-timers, cuts in pension benefits and more. Seeing that the acceptance of this contract would mean the breaking of our union, the IAM membership [nationally] voted 97 percent strong to authorize a strike.”



March 16, 1964

FRANKFORT, Ky., March 5 — The Negro liberation movement came to Kentucky in a big way today as 20,000 marchers jammed the streets of Kentucky’s capital to demonstrate support for a bill outlawing racial discrimination in public accommodations which is now before the state legislature.

The crowd, gathered before the capitol, had braved raw, windy weather, with temperatures in the upper 30s, to hear Rev. Martin Luther King praise the tactic of mass, non-violent demonstrations such as that in Washington last August and this in Frankfort today.

New allies for this struggle were to be seen among the marchers in a delegation of 18 coal miners and their families.



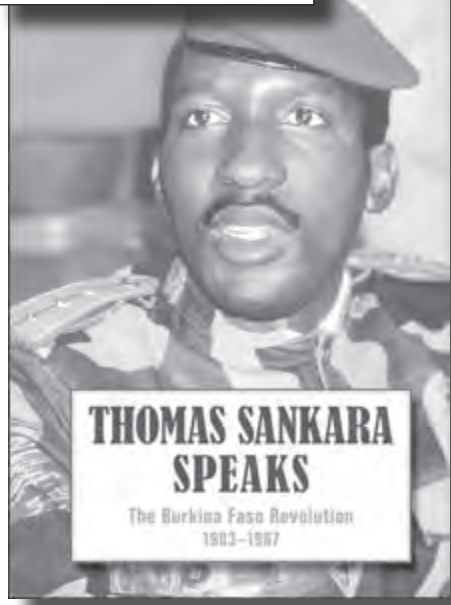
March 17, 1939

LOS ANGELES, March 8 — Los Angeles police last night used tear gas to help fascist youth break up a picket line which was protesting a meeting where Aileen O’Brien, Franco supporter, was the principal speaker.

Today a delegation including representatives from the Socialist Workers Party, the Young People’s Socialist League, and the American Fund for Political Prisoners and Refugees appeared before Mayor Bowron to protest the police brutality.

A group of fascist youth and students attempted to provoke a disturbance. The demonstrators began to resist this attack and were succeeding in quelling the disorder when police entered the fray.

See ad on page 3 for special offer!



Cuban press covers presentations of new books

‘No better way to open minds of people who have never heard the truth’

At recent meetings in Havana, two new books about the Cuban Five were received with enthusiasm. Audiences were especially interested in reports on how these books are being used in the United States and other countries to expand support for the campaign to free Gerardo Hernández, Ramón Labañino and Antonio Guerrero — the three who remain in prison. (See “Who Are the Cuban Five” on page 5 and front-page article on Fernando González’s release.)

Reprinted here are two articles from the Cuban press on one of these events, held Feb. 25 at the art studio of prominent artist Alexis Leyva, known as Kcho (pronounced Kacho). The meeting was organized by the Cuban Institute for Friendship with the Peoples (ICAP) and took place in the working-class neighborhood of Romerillo.

The first article is from the Feb. 26 issue of *Juventud Rebelde*, newspaper of the Union of Young Communists (UJC). The other is from the Cuban News Agency (ACN). The translation of both articles is by the *Militant*.

On Feb. 20 the two books, *I Will Die the Way I’ve Lived* and *Voices From Prison: The Cuban Five*, both published by Pathfinder Press, were presented at a meeting at the Havana International Book Fair (see remarks by René González on facing page).



BY ARACELYS BEDEVIA

The fight to free the Five is also a fight to defend the rights of working people in the United States. By defending the Five, we’re not doing them a favor — we’re fighting for ourselves. The battle to free the Cuban heroes is part of the class struggle in the United States, said Mary-Alice Waters, president of Pathfinder, during the presentation of two books — *Voices From Prison: The Cuban Five* and *I Will Die the Way I’ve Lived*, both published by Pathfinder.

At a gathering among friends held this Tuesday at the Kcho Romerillo Studio and Laboratory for Art, which was attended by Pioneers [members

of the children’s organization] from this Havana neighborhood, members of the International Committee for the Freedom of the 5, and representatives of Cuban organizations, Waters noted that in these two books we see the resilience and solidarity of these fighters, as well as their sense of humor.

“We have to thank the Five for their light and their strength, which is also the light and strength of the Cuban Revolution,” said the president of the U.S. publisher Pathfinder. *Voices From Prison: The Cuban Five* is a collection of writings by and about these Cuban antiterrorist fighters on their frame-up. *I Will Die the Way I’ve Lived* reproduces 15 watercolors by Antonio Guerrero. Both books were presented at the recently concluded 2014 Cuban International Book Fair in Havana. They were brought to Romerillo to make them more accessible to the community.

The power of these books, Waters stressed, comes from the Five themselves. Through these pages we see more clearly their qualities as human beings and we understand better what the word “revolutionary” means. The books reflect their feelings and dignity as they have resisted the pressures and stood firm despite years of cruel imprisonment.

This tireless fighter said Tony’s watercolors are tools to reach people and are “irreplaceable because they speak directly about the injustice of the capitalist system.”

The United States, she added, has the highest rate of incarceration of any country in the world, a reflection of the imperialist character of its government. “We now have two additional weapons to use in the struggle against the enemy, an enemy that is implacable because they are afraid of you. They are afraid of the Cuban Revolution. That’s why the Five were imprisoned,” said Waters, who is also editor of the magazine *New Internationalist*.

Pathfinder publications and the newspaper *The Militant*, circulate in the prisons, “sometimes with difficulty because there are attempts to

Right, Mirta Rodríguez, mother of Antonio Guerrero, speaks at Feb. 25 book presentation in Romerillo, Havana. She said Guerrero, locked up in Florida federal prison, asked her to convey his thanks and delight at receiving *I Will Die the Way I’ve Lived* and *Voices From Prison*. The books, she said, express “the strength and determination of the Five.” They are “five men who deemed it worthwhile to struggle these past 15 years and who will continue as long as necessary.” For her part, Rodríguez said, “my life is a life of struggle. A day without struggle is a day lost.” At left is Kenia Serrano, president of Cuban Institute for Friendship with the Peoples (ICAP). At right is Mary-Alice Waters, president of Pathfinder Press. **Photo below**, part of audience at meeting.



Militant photos by Jonathan Silberman

stop them,” but they are read there, said Waters, who is the author, among other titles, of *Is Socialist Revolution in the U.S. Possible?* and, together with Martin Koppel, *Capitalism and the Transformation of Africa*.

Also attending the presentation were Commander Víctor Dreke, vice president of the Association of Combatants of the Cuban Revolution; Graciela Ramírez, chair of the International Committee for the Freedom of the Cuban 5; and Mirta Rodríguez, the mother of Antonio Guerrero, representing the families of the Five.

The ‘hole’ at the Fine Arts Museum

These books are a condemnation of the harsh treatment the Five have received in prison and an example of their resistance in face of adversity, said Kenia Serrano Puig, president of the Cuban Institute for Friendship with the Peoples (ICAP), when she spoke at the Romerillo event.

Voices From Prison: The Cuban Five and *I Will Die the Way I’ve Lived* are a real testimony to how the Five have resisted, thanks to the firmness of their revolutionary principles, the solidarity they have received, and their enormous creativity. “What better place to present these books than Romerillo,” said Serrano, who invited the audience to tour the entire Kcho Romerillo Studio and Laboratory for Art. The studio is a nonprofit cultural center whose purpose is experimentation as well as development and promotion of art and human understanding.

During the tour of the site, artist Alexis Leyva Machado — “Kcho” — said that in a week the National Museum of Fine Arts would inaugurate an installation titled *Vergüenza* (Shame), which reproduces architecturally the “Hole” where the Five were confined.

‘Experience of Five similar to th

BY LISANDRA ROMEA MATOS

HAVANA — The Kcho Romerillo Studio, located in the Romerillo neighborhood of Playa municipality, hosted a presentation on Tuesday of two books on the Cubans convicted in the United States for fighting terrorism.

Pioneers and the general public from the neighborhood gathered at this cultural center to learn about the books — *I Will Die the Way I’ve Lived*, which presents 15 watercolors by Antonio Guerrero marking the 15th anniversary of their unjust imprisonment, and *Voices From Prison*, both published by Pathfinder.

Mary-Alice Waters, president of the U.S. publishing house, said the two books aim to open the minds of people who have never heard about René González, Antonio Guerrero, Fernando González, Ramón Labañino, and Gerardo Hernández.

She noted that the power of these books, published in Spanish and English, comes from the experiences these patriots and their families have lived through, which are similar to those of millions in the U.S. who have some family member



Militant/Jonathan Silberman

ICAP President Kenia Serrano speaks at Feb. 25 book presentation in Havana neighborhood of Romerillo. Many attending event said they learned things they hadn’t known about political work of the Cuban Five in prison and respect they won from fellow inmates.

new books on Cuban 5 at art studio, fair

h about Cuban Revolution than to introduce them to our five brothers'



Well-known Cuban artist Kcho, above, speaks at Feb. 25 book presentation at his art studio and cultural center in Havana. At Havana's Fine Arts Museum, in collaboration with René González, Kcho is creating replica of "hole" where Cuban Five spent first 17 months in U.S. prison, using *I Will Die the Way I've Lived* as a guide. Antonio Guerrero's watercolors will also be exhibited at museum with that book serving as catalog.

at of millions of workers in US'

in prison.

Kenia Serrano, president of the Cuban Institute for Friendship with the Peoples, said the books are a true testimony to how the patriots' firm principles, dignity, self-esteem, and creative capacity have enabled them to resist severe prison conditions.

Mirta Rodríguez, the mother of Antonio, thanked Pathfinder for its efforts in the fight to defend the Cuban antiterrorists. She urged others to use the two books to publicize the case internationally, especially among the people of the United States.

The artist Alexis Leyva (Kcho) called for continuing to fight to put an end to this injustice. He announced that an installation evoking the Five would soon open at the National Museum of Fine Arts.

The Kcho Romerillo Studio and Laboratory for Art was inaugurated Jan. 8 with Fidel Castro, the historic leader of the Cuban Revolution, present. The purpose of the project, headed by the artist Kcho, a native of Pinar del Río, is experimentation and the development and promotion of the arts.



Militant/Jonathan Silberman

René González addresses Feb. 20 presentation at Havana book fair of new titles about the Cuban Five. These were *I Will Die the Way I've Lived* and *Voices From Prison* by Pathfinder Press; Russian-Spanish collections of Antonio Guerrero's poetry; and a book of Cuban recipes including favorite dishes of Five. Panelists from left, Russian author Viktor Avdeev, a translator, Zarifa Salahova from Azerbaijan, moderator Javier Salado of International Committee for the Freedom of the Cuban 5, Pathfinder President Mary-Alice Waters and Cuban chef Francisco Rodríguez.

'In prison, books helped us mature as Marxists'

René González, one of the Cuban Five, spoke at a Feb. 20 event during the Havana International Book Fair. Panelists from the United States, Cuba, Russia and Azerbaijan presented several new books to aid the defense effort (see photo above). González's remarks are below; the translation and subheads are by the Militant.

BY RENÉ GONZÁLEZ

As I was reading the book with Antonio's paintings being presented today, it brought back memories — how could it not? — of our year and a half in the "hole."

Our friend who spoke here [Cuban panelist Francisco Rodríguez] told us about when he found himself alone at an airport in France. "The revolution doesn't abandon its sons and daughters," he said.

When we found ourselves in the hole, our faith in the truth of that statement was put to a test. Of course, history had provided plenty of evidence for us to be confident this would be the case.

During the time we were in the hole, I developed a lot of admiration for Gerardo, Ramón and Fernando, because for two years the three of them weren't able to have the slightest contact with their families. That was until the trial began, when they were finally able to state their real identities. I'd see them day after day, and — although I was going through my own family tragedy, imposed arbitrarily by the prosecution — I could not but feel admiration for them.

As I studied Tony's drawings and read the stories recounted by my brothers, the first thing I noticed was something that surprises people — not me, because I went through the

same experience. It's the lack of anger, the complete lack of hatred or resentment when they talk about the conditions in the hole.

You might wonder, how can that be? They really did treat us badly and did everything possible to make us bitter.

We didn't let them make us bitter

Well, it's probably for that very reason, I think. In fact, one of the ways we were able to defeat them was that we left that situation with our spirits high, without hatred or resentment.

I'm realizing it's hard for us to think about that period without recalling those little details, those creative schemes we came up with to overcome all the difficulties — the things we had to improvise, the ingenuity, the humor. The things that even in those conditions helped make life brighter and prevented the prosecutors from achieving what they wanted, which was to break us, to make us bitter, to damage us.

When you win you don't have to become bitter. And that's what happened — we won. We defeated them in the hole. We defeated them in the trial. And every day in prison my brothers are defeating the prosecutors, the judges, and all those who organized the frame-up case against us.

There's probably an element here of what our friend [Russian

panelist Viktor Avdeev] reminded me of, that wonderful [Soviet] novel *How the Steel Was Tempered*. Some say it's a work of socialist realism; I'm not interested in that. What I do think is that it's a great novel, and this kind of literature, among other things, helped us grow and be able to stand up to imperialism.

Some day when capitalism is a thing of the past, children will be taught about its stupidities. But unfortunately capitalist stupidity is still everywhere around us and seems to be in fashion. And so when we see something as beautiful as *How the Steel Was Tempered*, we view it as something strange.

The fact is that we're here, and my brothers are still imprisoned, but they continue to win. And going back to

Continued on page 11

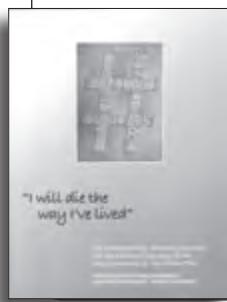
Voices From Prison: The Cuban Five



The dignity and integrity of the Cuban Five has won them the respect of thousands around the world as well as fellow prisoners. Here three who have known them behind bars speak out. Also accounts of prison life and resistance by Gerardo Hernández, Ramón Labañino, Elizabeth Palmeiro and Puerto Rican independence fighter Rafael Cancel Miranda. Also in Spanish.

\$7. Special publication offer \$5

'I Will Die the Way I've Lived'



Fifteen watercolors by Antonio Guerrero for the 15th anniversary of the imprisonment of the Cuban Five. With text by Guerrero, Gerardo Hernández, Ramón Labañino. Also in Spanish.

\$7. Special publication offer \$5

pathfinderpress.com

Cambodia workers

Continued from front page

their demand of \$160. Protests and strike actions subsided after riot cops and soldiers attacked and opened fire on demonstrators Jan. 3, killing five workers and seriously injuring dozens. Twenty-one strikers are still being held at a high-security prison.

On Feb. 13, 18 unions and labor federations announced a plan of new actions, starting with the overtime boycott.

“It’s a campaign to push the factory owners and the government to increase the minimum wage for garment, textile and shoe workers,” Rong Chhun, president of the Cambodia Confederation of Unions, told the *Militant* by phone from Phnom Penh March 3. “We have spread 200,000 leaflets to inform workers and we have received a good response. We can’t survive on \$100 a month.”

Union leaders estimate that more than 100,000 workers boycotted overtime over the five days. There are 600,000 workers in some 800 plants in the garment and shoe industry in Cambodia. Ken Loo, secretary-general of the Garment Manufacturers Association, claimed few factories were affected.

“It was different between different factories,” Say Sokny, general secretary of the Free Trade Union, told the *Militant* March 4. “In some it was 10 percent, in some 25 percent, in some more. There were factories where all workers boycotted overtime.”

Units from the Royal Cambodian Armed Forces’ Brigade 70 and Brigade 99, carrying AK-47s, began patrolling outside Canadia Industrial Park when the overtime boycott began Feb. 24. When workers left their factories without doing overtime the soldiers harassed them about leaving early.

“We’re in a difficult situation,” Khum Barang, 24, one of the workers, told the *Cambodia Daily* Feb. 27. “We are afraid because we know they will shoot at us, but if the rest strike, we have to join them.”

The *Phnom Penh Post* reported March 4 that workers at two different factories said managers had locked them inside the factory gates to stop them from joining the boycott.

Workers regularly work overtime to pay for rising prices of basic necessities. “We do not yet earn \$100, but my landlord raised the price of my rental room by \$5 and food prices have sky-

rocketed,” Sdoeung, who works at SL Garment Processing, told the *Post* Feb. 19. “Sometimes we work 16-hour days.” Rents and food prices around the factories and in workers’ neighborhoods are pegged to the minimum wage. Wages for garment workers dropped by 22 percent in real terms between 2001 and 2011.

On Feb. 27, 82 workers fainted in a garment factory from inhaling fumes from leaking battery acid and 26 fainted the same day in a shoe plant from inhaling glue fumes.

On Feb. 19, the country’s commerce and labor ministers met with representatives from H&M, Gap and Puma, retailers that buy apparel produced in Cambodia. “We can see frequent industrial conflicts coming here,” an H&M representative told the *Cambodia Daily*. “For H&M to continue to develop in Cambodia ... we need stability, healthy industrial relations, a functioning wage mechanism. ... We need a sourcing country that is predictable [and] stable.”

The same day Prime Minister Hun Sen beefed up the government’s Committee to Solve Strikes and Demonstrations of All Targets, which is tasked to deal with workers’ protests. Added to it were the commander and deputy commander of the Royal Cambodian Armed Forces, commander of the National Military Police, National Police chief, secretary of state of the Defense

New communist book center opens in Greece

BY GEORGES MEHRABIAN

ATHENS, Greece — Nearly 50 people gathered Feb. 16 to celebrate the opening of the new offices and warehouse here of Diethnes Vima, which publishes books on revolutionary working-class politics in Greek as well as Arabic. Participants included workers who have been part of three

recent strikes, unionists engaged in organizing efforts at the airport, construction workers, students and others active in solidarity with the Cuban Revolution.

“We are happy to celebrate the publication of our most recent title, *Lenin’s Final Fight*, and to announce that we are working on the following books: *Che Guevara: Economics and Politics in the Transition to Socialism* by Carlos Tablada, *Teamster Rebellion* by Farrell Dobbs, and *Women in Cuba: The Making of a Revolution Within the Revolution*,” said event chair Natasha Terlexi, an editor at Diethnes Vima and airline worker. Diethnes Vima mainly publishes translations of books by Pathfinder Press, like the three above.

Cuba’s ambassador to Greece, Oswaldo Cabacho Martínez, gave extended greetings. Italian-born painter Renata Menis donated one of her beautiful works to be hung at the new offices. Loukia Konstantinou, a two-time participant in international volunteer work brigades in Cuba also spoke.

“*Teamster Rebellion*, a book about workers in the U.S. who in the 1930s built class-struggle industrial unions, will be an invaluable tool for our fights here,” said Bobbis Misailides, another

Ministry, head of the Defense Ministry’s counter-terrorism department and commander of the Prime Minister’s Bodyguard Unit. “It’s a good sign that heads of various armed forces are now direct members of the committee,” said Loo. “They are trying to scare people, but we will move ahead with our campaign,” Sokny said. “On March 8, International Women’s Day, we plan a forum in Freedom Park in the center of Phnom Penh to keep pressure on the government. If nothing is resolved by March 12, we will organize a stay-at-home strike. We do not plan to organize workers to go out into the streets” at this time.

Diethnes Vima editor who also works at the Athens airport.

Sofia Roditi, a leader of the Women’s Committee of the nine-month-long steelworkers strike at Elliniki Halivourgia that ended in July 2012, also spoke. She was at the meeting with her steelworker husband and daughter. She learned about Diethnes Vima from airport workers who joined the steelworkers’ picket lines in solidarity. “I appreciated two books the most, *Problems of Women’s Liberation* by Evelyn Reed and the book on the Cuban Five, which opened my eyes to the Cuban Revolution.”

Teamster Rebellion by Farrell Dobbs

The 1934 strikes that built the industrial union movement in Minneapolis and helped pave the way for the CIO, as recounted by a central leader of that battle.—\$19

PathfinderPress.com

Bashar al-Assad regime in Syria maintains bombings, sieges



UNRWA Archives

Thousands line up to receive United Nations food parcels at Yarmouk refugee camp in Syria south of the capital Damascus Jan. 18.

In recent weeks, hundreds of thousands of Syrians have fled parts of Aleppo, the country’s largest city, under heavy aerial bombardment by forces of Syrian President Bashar al-Assad that leveled whole neighborhoods. Close to 90,000 have taken refuge in Kilis, Turkey, doubling the city’s population.

Working-class neighborhoods in Aleppo, in and around Damascus and elsewhere have been pounded, including with barrel bombs that disperse deadly shrapnel over a wide area and take down buildings.

The UN says that the Assad regime currently has some 800,000 Syrians under “starvation sieges,” hemmed inside their neighborhoods and denied food, medical supplies and other necessities.

The number killed in the conflict has now passed 140,000, the Syrian Observatory for Human Rights reported Feb. 15. “These statistics do not include the fate of more than 180,000 people missing inside the regime’s prisons,” the Observatory said.

The UN reports that there are now more than 2.4 million Syrian refugees registered with them: 932,000 in Lebanon, 574,000 in Jordan, 613,000 in Turkey, 223,000 in Iraq and 134,000 in Egypt.

— JOHN STUDER

Walmart ‘safety’ bonus to build communist movement

“Knowing that a significant piece of this modest contribution goes to the defense of the Cuban Five and the Cuban Revolution is gratifying. In Cuba, injuries on the job or otherwise are treated with the finest medical care available. There is no ‘bonus’ for the sacrificing of limb and life there. Hail to the Cuban Revolution! No more blood-dripped bonuses!”

So began a note sent by Morrie Dietrich in Des Moines, Iowa, along with a donation to the Socialist Workers Party Capital Fund. The \$75 so-called safety bonus is from a period of no reported injuries at Walmart where he works in customer service. Bosses’ “gifts” and “bonuses” for safety, attendance, profit-sharing and numerous other things are designed to press us to accept dangerous working conditions, speedup, concession contracts, wage cuts and divide-and-rule tactics.

“They reduce full-time jobs mostly through attrition by hiring part-time positions primarily,” Dietrich wrote. “Now they are on a campaign for us to be more like semi-security guards by checking unbagged and returned items.”

Blood money donations form the political bedrock of the Capital Fund, which finances long-range work of the Socialist Workers Party. To make a contribution, contact distributors on page 6 or the *Militant* at (212) 244-4899.

— EMMA JOHNSON

Russian troops out of Ukraine!

Working people everywhere should join tens of thousands in Kiev, Odessa, Donetsk, Moscow, as well as in Simferopol, the Crimean capital, to demand the unconditional withdrawal of all Russian troops from Crimea and Ukraine.

The secret-police regime of Vladimir Putin invaded from weakness, fearing the loss of crucial sources of investment and profit and losing control over other former Soviet republics.

The overthrow of President Viktor Yanukovich is a victory for the workers, farmers and oppressed people in Ukraine. It strikes a big blow to Great Russian domination, which has existed for centuries. The exception was the Bolshevik government under the leadership of V.I. Lenin, which championed the right to self-determination of nations oppressed under the czarist empire as part of a program that started with the interests of the working class worldwide.

The fight against Russian domination opens political space for the toilers to discuss and debate politics, to continue to fight against exploitation and national

oppression and to find a road to overthrow capitalist rule and replace it with a workers and farmers government.

Putin cynically claims he is protecting the people of Crimea. But his actions in regard to the rights of the Tatar people are akin to those of Joseph Stalin, who expelled the Tatars en masse from their Crimean homeland in 1944 — an exodus that nearly half of them did not survive.

Washington and the European Union hope developments in Ukraine will open the door to further imperialist penetration. But, like the government in Moscow, they fear the mobilizations that toppled the regime in Kiev. They seek “order” and demobilization of the Maidan. In the name of “democracy” they have nothing to offer outside economic “reforms” that would further devastate workers’ standard of living. Working people should also demand U.S. hands off Ukraine.

The fate of Ukraine, including Crimea, is for the Ukrainian people — in their overwhelming majority workers and farmers — to decide.

Crimean region occupied by Moscow

Continued from front page

Ukrainian peninsula home to the Russian navy on the Black Sea.

For centuries Crimea was the homeland of the Tatar people. After the 1917 Russian Revolution, the Bolshevik Party under the leadership of V.I. Lenin defended the right to self-determination for nationalities oppressed under the czarist regime. Both Crimea and Ukraine declared independence and were won to voluntary association as equal republics to Russia in the Soviet Union.

After the death of Lenin, a growing privileged social layer based in the government apparatus carried through a thoroughgoing counterrevolution led by Joseph Stalin. In years that followed the Stalinist government arrested and murdered indigenous revolutionary leaders and trampled over national rights of non-Russian peoples in Crimea and Ukraine.

The Russification policy of the old czarist empire — the importation of Russians to weaken the influence of Ukrainian and Tatar peoples — was revived.

In 1944, during the Second World War, Stalin slandered the entire Tatar people as agents of Hitler and forcibly uprooted them to Uzbekistan, Siberia and the Urals. Nearly half of the Tatar population died in the process.

Beginning in the 1960s and especially after the fall of the Soviet Union in 1991, Tatars began returning to their Crimean homeland where they faced discrimination, their lands now occupied by Russian settlers. There are 270,000 Tatars among the 2 million people in Crimea and they overwhelmingly support the fight for Ukrainian independence from Russia.

After the fall of Yanukovich’s government, Russian state media peddled a tale of anarchy and brutal reprisals against Russian speakers in Ukraine. A Russian foreign ministry statement decried “excesses of militants on Maidan, the bullying of their political opponents and ordinary citizens, anti-Semitism, militant-Russophobia and the desecration of monuments to the heroes of World War II.”

Russian television spun accounts of hundreds of thousands of Ukrainians fleeing over to Russia to escape the carnage. The images shown on screen, however, turned out to be cars lined up at a border crossing with Poland.

Supporters of the Putin government in Russia went to Crimea to help organize pro-Moscow forces there. Sergei Aksyonov, one of three deputies from the Russian Unity party in the 100-seat Crimean regional assembly, and others pulled together a pro-Russia demonstration Feb. 26 in the capital Simferopol that received prominent coverage in the big-business media in the U.S. But what received little notice was a larger rally that day in support of the new Ukraine comprised of Tatars, Ukrainians and Russians.

The next morning, Aksyonov and others orga-

nized a group of armed thugs to seize Crimea’s assembly building, keep out the press, and preside over a closed-door session that named him prime minister of Crimea.

Aksyonov told a news conference March 4 that he was in complete control of the province, even though armed standoffs continue between Russian forces and Ukrainian troops at several military installations, where the Ukrainians refuse to give up their post.

Protests against occupation

Tens of thousands have taken to the streets in the south and east of Ukraine, areas where there are significant numbers of Russian speakers, demanding that Moscow stop its invasion. Ten thousand marched for four hours in Odessa March 2. Among the slogans were “Putin take your hands off Crimea,” “Odessa, Kiev, Crimea: Ukraine is united,” and “Putin and Yanukovich will be cellmates in prison.”

Ten thousand gathered outside the Local State Administration offices in Dnipropetrovsk to condemn Russian aggression. More than 5,000 marched in Mykolaiv in the south, chanting “Putin, go away!” Several thousand protested in Zaporizhia in the east. A thousand rallied in the eastern city of Kharkiv carrying placards saying, “Kharkiv is Ukraine.”

Dozens were arrested when some 400 rallied in Moscow against Putin’s invasion.

The Russian occupation is born out of weakness and necessity for Russian capitalists, who amassed great fortunes out of the theft of state property after the fall of the Soviet Union. The Russian economy is a “petro-oligarchy,” vulnerable and dependent on high oil and gas prices. But these resources are becoming less and less profitable in a world where massive quantities of natural gas are flowing from “fracking” extraction in the U.S. and elsewhere. The secret-police regime in Moscow is driven to seek control of markets, resources and productive capacity from former members of the Soviet Union and elsewhere.

Russian bonds, stocks and the ruble tumbled after the Russian military intervention. The ruble sank to an all-time low against the dollar and the euro. The Bank of Russia responded by hiking interest rates by 1.5 percent in an effort to stem capital flow out of the country.

Putin invaded the former Soviet republic of Georgia in 2008, seizing part of its territory. When President Barack Obama took office the next year, he launched a policy of “reset” toward Moscow, seeking dialogue and cooperation.

The Defense Department announced March 5 that Washington is stepping up air patrols over Estonia, Lithuania and Latvia.

Putin’s bet is that Obama — who has proposed deep cuts in the U.S. war budget and adopted a passive stance toward the Syrian government to the advantage of Moscow and its ally President Bashar al-Assad — will resist countering Russia’s moves.

René González

Continued from page 9

that period of loneliness in the hole, you can’t help noticing how at a certain point, little by little, we were no longer alone.

Here with us we have Mary-Alice [Waters of Pathfinder Press]. Mary-Alice has been with us through all these years with her books, as part of the struggle — she’s like a member of the family.

Not a week went by that we didn’t receive the *Militant* with something about the Five in it. Getting out word about the cause, defending us. Multiplying our words, our thinking, our message. Over those more than 15 years we’ve always had the solidarity, the presence, the spirit of what she and her *compañeros* represent. The Five will be eternally grateful for that.

Books helped us see world and grow

In prison, the books by Pathfinder helped us mature, helped us grow, helped us see the world, helped us become more Marxist. In an environment where all you saw on television was inanities, you could shut yourself up in your cell, grab a Pathfinder book, start to read, and you were in another world.

You were learning, you were analyzing, you were maturing. Every day you read a book by Pathfinder you became a better person. And so, before all of you, I have to publicly express my gratitude to Mary-Alice.

The *Militant* would slip its way through the prison. My friends would take it and furtively sneak it into the library. It would be removed, and they’d slip it back in. It was a real struggle for people to be able to read Pathfinder literature, and they did read it. People in prison learned about the Five through Pathfinder, and they respected and appreciated us more. And we’re grateful for that.

What Mary-Alice represents is what has happened after those years when we were alone, when the only thing that sustained us was our faith in the Cuban Revolution. Today we have friends here from the former Soviet Union. We have a friend here from Iran, who recently gave me a book in Farsi [a new Iranian edition of *The Cuban Five: Who They Are, Why They Were Framed, Why They Should Be Free*]. And that means solidarity is growing.

Of course, we can’t be satisfied. There’s a lot to do and I believe now is the time to do it. Conditions have never been better than they are now to keep fighting and to send the message about the Five to the White House. Today each of us needs to do everything we can to keep widening the circle of people who know about the case, to keep widening the circle of solidarity. This is the time to pressure Obama.

Must reach beyond those we know

We need the solidarity of everyone. We need solidarity that goes beyond the left.

We need to go beyond the people we already know and reach out to those we don’t. Even to those we may be a little afraid of reaching because perhaps they don’t agree with us. A book like this one with Tony’s paintings can reach the heart of any decent person beyond their political ideas.

I want to conclude now, because it’s time for questions and comments. I’m sure you’ll have questions. The only thing I want to add is that if you go to the Museum of Fine Arts, you’ll see another great friend, another great Cuban, Kcho, creating an exact replica of the “hole.” It will soon open to the public.

Kcho is applying all his imagination and talent for that type of work. So we encourage you to go see it and be part of that experience, and hope a lot of visitors at the Fine Arts Museum will see it. We hope it becomes an instrument for this struggle.

But again, the main instrument is us — it’s you and it’s the people you can reach in any way possible. We need the solidarity of the world to press the White House. And for that we count on you.

‘Militant’ Prisoners’ Fund

The Prisoners’ Fund makes it possible to send prisoners reduced rate subscriptions. To donate, send a check or money order payable to the *Militant* and earmarked “Prisoners’ Fund” to 306 W. 37th St., 13th Floor, New York, NY 10018.